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JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2008

In Today's Papers

Top U.S. Official Comments on the AKP Closure Case
Sabah, Milliyet, Hurriyet, Zaman, Vatan, Radikal, Star, Bugun:
Today's papers report that U.S. Deputy Assistant of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Matt Bryza commented on the AKP closure case during a speech at a conference organized by the Washington Institute. Coverage includes Bryza's statements that, "The closure of the party would be an unfortunate development. This is Turkey's business to resolve. It would not be appropriate for the U.S. to issue an ultimatum or threaten Turkey." Liberal Radikal and Islamist-oriented Zaman call Bryza's statements "an open warning from the U.S." Bryza also commented on Turkey's EU process when he said, "If the EU halts negotiations with Turkey because of the closure case, U.S. national interests would suffer. If full EU membership is not on the horizon, it will be difficult for Turkish leaders to pass reforms." Mainstream Hurriyet notes Bryza said, "The Turkish democratic system is strong enough to solve the problem." Nationalist Ortadogu headline reads "The U.S. takes the AKP under its Protection," and criticizes Bryza's comments by saying "PM Erdogan fulfills every request from President Bush. And the U.S., in return, supports the AKP. With his comments, Bryza went overboard by sending a message to our judiciary regarding the AKP closure case."

EDITORIAL OPINION: Turkish Political Trends and Analyses

"Trapped Between Trauma and an Action Plan"
Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in mainstream Hurriyet (6/26): "Turkey's problem stems from the fact that people are forced to choose between limited political approaches. One option is to support the military for the sake of protecting the Turkish Republic. The other option is to embrace conservatism in the name of the fight against unfairness. The former choice will do its best to make gloomy plans for the country's future while the latter will do everything it can to avenge the history of the Turkish Republic. This is a game, yet we call it democracy. None of these debates have anything to do with democracy and freedoms. These tensions are all about political turf. The AKP's Firat said some parts of society were traumatized by Ataturk's reforms. There is some truth to this. However,

Firat's tone makes me wonder why he and his supporters fight only for their own concerns. Freedom is for everybody with absolutely no exception. Our history is based on two fundamental ideologies - secularism and Islamism. Neither ideology stands on democratic grounds; what we see today is the fight between the two ideologies for their share of the political pie. The fight will only end when the two sides agree to share. Until then, Islamists will continue to discuss their trauma while the Turkish military will make secret plans to influence public opinion."

"Trauma"

Taha Akyol wrote in mainstream Milliyet (6/26): "The very essence and nature of revolutions are traumatic; a revolution is radical in and of itself. The ruling AKP's number two in charge expressed his opinion that society was traumatized by Ataturk's reforms. Expressing an opinion on the subject is not a bad thing. The tragedy lies in the outcome of his statement. This politician, from the ruling party, has now created more trauma and more polarization in society. Such historical debates should be held among intellectuals instead of governing politicians. The fault lies on both sides of society. One side fears Islamic fundamentalism, but the AKP is unable to eliminate concerns regarding an underlying Islamist agenda. Now is the time for the ruling AKP to return to its prior focus on the economy, democracy and EU integration."

General Basbug Criticizes the Media

All papers report that Land Forces Commander General Ilker Basbug commented on his meeting with Prime Minister Erdogan. Basbug stated that it was the PM who requested the meeting, which focused on the

ANKARA 00001175 002 OF 003

subject of terrorism, and the Chief of the General Staff was aware of the meeting. Basbug criticized the media and urged them to make thorough investigations before preparing their news reports.

If I Return, I will Return as Fethullah Gulen

Hurriyet, Sabah, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, and others: The Court of Appeals upheld Fethullah Gulen's acquittal by a lower court, so the media is speculating on Gulen's return to Turkey. In an interview with www.herkul.org internet site, Gulen said he would like to keep a low profile in the event his return could create problems. Mainstream Hurriyet reports that Gulen reacted to the rumors that his return would be like Khomeini's return to Iran and said "If I return, I will return as I am." Gulen's close associate Huseyin Gulerce stressed that Gulen wants to have a quiet return and he doesn't want any of his supporters to demonstrate. Hurriyet adds that Gulen pushed the button for his return to Turkey and leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet, in contrast, says that Gulen "will exert every effort to extend his stay in the U.S." In addition, the paper reports, Gulen has applied for a U.S. permanent residence card. Hurriyet published the full list of those who wrote letters in support of Gulen's green card application, including former CIA chief Graham Fuller and former Ambassador to Turkey Morton Abramowitz.

3 PKK Killed in Tendurek Mountain of Agri

Sabah, Milliyet, Hurriyet, Cumhuriyet and others: During clashes with the PKK, Turkish security forces killed three terrorists on Tendurek Mountain in Agri. During the clashes, one soldier and a first lieutenant were injured. Security forces confiscated a U.S.-made M-16 rifle from one of the dead.

Turkey Friendship Group to be Established in the European Parliament

Zaman, Cumhuriyet, Star: Turkish-German socialist deputy Vural Oger and six other members of the European Parliament have established a "Turkey Friendship Group" within the parliament in order to support Turkey's bid to join the EU. The group will work on visa issues, transporters' quota problems, and efforts to eliminate mutual prejudices between Turkey and the EU.

U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Blocked

Media outlets are uniformly criticizing the Armenian lobby for delaying Maria Yovanovitch's confirmation as ambassador to Armenia. Islamist-oriented Zaman writes in, "A New Obstacle for the Candidate

for U.S. Ambassador to Yerevan," that "Barbara Boxer, who belongs to the Armenian lobby, has halted the approval process for Marie Yovanovitch for one month." In "The Armenian Lobby Puts the Brakes on Bush's Nominee for Ambassador," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes, "Barbara Boxer has blocked the nomination because she is close to the Armenian lobby, who opposes Yovanovitch's nomination due to her statements against the use of the term 'genocide' in reference to the events of 1915." In addition, the paper reports, "Yovanovitch met with New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez, who is known to be close to the Armenian lobby, last week and told him she characterized the events of 1915 as 'ethnic cleansing.'" Liberal Radikal writes, "The Armenian lobby trips up another ambassador," as former nominee Richard Hoagland's nomination, "was vetoed by New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez because Hoagland rejected the term 'genocide,'" in describing the events of 1915. Mainstream Milliyet calls Barbara Boxer's action, "an obstacle from a senator who is close to the Armenian lobby," as, "even only one senator can block the entire confirmation process." Mainstream Hurriyet writes, "The Armenian lobby blocks an ambassadorial appointment," because, "during a speech in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee she did not use the word 'genocide,' but instead used the word 'ethnic cleansing,' to describe the events of 1915." Leftist Taraf writes, "An Ambassador against 'Genocide' Is Delayed."

TV Highlights
CNN Turk

ANKARA 00001175 003 OF 003

Domestic News

- President Gul approves a bill authorizing Kurdish-language broadcasting on state-owned TRT television.
- The Interior Ministry released a circular to prevent violent soccer celebrations.
- The Ankara municipality plans to buy 500 new commuter buses.
- Farming Minister Mehdi Eker said that tensions with Russia regarding tomato exports are now resolved.

International News

- Tropical storm Fengshen left 329 people dead and 1000 others missing in the Philippines.
 - Saudi Arabia detained 520 Al-Qaeda suspects for involvement in terrorism.
 - According to the "World Public Opinion" poll, 51 percent of Turkish people support the use of torture on terrorists if it could save innocent lives.
 - Iran plans to withdraw assets from the EU in response to the tightening of sanctions imposed over its nuclear program.
- WILSON